

## REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated May 10, 2004. Claims 1-7 are presently pending.

### Specification

The Office Action objected to several items in the abstract and specification. The Applicants have amended the abstract and specification as requested by the Examiner. The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these objections.

## Drawings

The Office Action objected to the drawings alleging that reference 28 does not clearly point out the multiple physical communication links in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The Applicant respectfully submits that the drawings require no correction because the multiple physical communication links are correctly identified as 28a-n (Figure 1), 28a-d (Figure 2), and 28a-e (Figure 3) as described, for example, in the specification at Paragraph 0016. Accordingly, the Applicant requests withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

## §103 Rejections

Claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,002,670 to Rahman et al. (hereinafter “Rahman”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,574,191 to Usukura et al. (hereinafter “Usukura”). Claims 2 and 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rahman in view of Usukura and further in view of the alleged admitted prior art. The Applicant traverses these rejections.

None of the cited references teaches or suggest “at least one data link selected from the plurality of low capacity data links that is trained and set to idle status, wherein the first unit and the second unit switch to use the trained idle data link to replace any one of the active trained data links

that has failed...” as recited in claim 1. The Office Action admits that Rahman does not teach or suggest such an element.

The Office Action turns to Usukura and “infers that at least one transmission line (data link) is selected from the plurality of transmission lines (data links) and is set to backup (idle) status, since it can be switched without a delay in time.” The Applicant respectfully submits that Usukura does not teach or suggest what the Office Action infers.

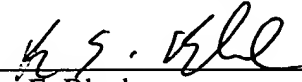
There is no need to infer any scheme for failure of a communication line, as suggested by the Office Action, because Usukura has provided a complete description and that description does not teach or suggest the Applicant’s claimed inventions. Usukura explicitly describes and illustrates what occurs when a transmission line fails at Col. 11, line 58 to Col. 13, line 5 and Figures 10A, 10B, 10C, 11, and 12. In Usukura, lines 32a, 32b, and 32c are designated to transmit packets. Usukura states that when transmission line 32c fails “the packet which is to be sent out to the intermediate transmission line 32c at the time of a normal operation is alternatively distributed between the intermediate transmission lines 32a and 32b.” (Col. 12, lines 34-37 and illustrated in Figures 10A, 10B, 10C, and 12) In other words, Usukura explicitly teaches that when one active transmission line (32c) fails, the packet load for that line should be distributed among other active transmission lines (32a, 32b). Usukura fails to teach a data link set to idle status and available to replace any one of the active trained data links that fails. Instead, Usukura provides an alternative that does not teach or suggest the Applicant’s claimed inventions. None of the other cited references address this deficiency of Usukura.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons the Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, and claims 2-7 which depend from claim 1, are patentable over the cited references. The Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of these claims.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments